

# Dentist For Sixty-one Years

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

*Tribune-Star* 2-17-57

GEN.

To learn more about the history of dentistry in Terre Haute, I interviewed Dr. Frank P. Anshutz, 1601 South Fifth street, who is 83 years old, the oldest dentist in the city. He was born in 1873 in Ohio, and as a young man debated whether to become a dentist or to follow his dream of becoming an artist. When the time came to decide whether it would be art school or dental college, the latter won out. His father, who was a dentist, offered to pay all expenses if he would consent to go to dental college.



Dorothy J. Clark.

Another contributing factor was his engagement to the young lady who was later to become Mrs. Anshutz. He has never regretted his decision to become a dentist. His first love—drawing—became an absorbing hobby. After seeing some of his talented work, I feel sure he would have been just as successful in that field.

In the history of the Anshutz family there have been fourteen dentists up to the present time. His father, brother, uncles, cousins, son and grandsons comprise this family of dentists. Dr. Anshutz graduated from Ohio Dental College at the University of Cincinnati in 1895. This was the second oldest dental college in the United States, the first being at Baltimore. The great problem at that time was to find the solution to painless dentistry.

## Used Laughing Gas.

Nitrous oxide (laughing gas) was the anesthetic most generally used, but most people were afraid of any type of anesthetic. One of his professors was successful in using hypnosis on those few patients who were susceptible. Now we read frequently of the use of hypnosis as a modern method, when it has really been used for a great many years. People took very little care of their teeth, and pyorrhea was very common. One needed to be a hero to withstand the painful fillings, so most people waited until extractions were absolutely necessary.

In 1895, dentists didn't know too much about blocking off nerves with local anesthetics such as we have now. In fact, novocaine wasn't patented until 1901 for the first time. Weak solutions of cocaine were injected hypodermically by large-gauge needles. Another great improvement are the very fine needles used in modern dentistry. Ethyl chloride was used as a spray on the outside of the jaw where the tooth was to be extracted.

However, the after effects of this freezing process were almost worse than the extraction would have been without using anything. The most common aid was whisky. The patient with the toothache would come to the office well supplied with a bottle and proceed to drink himself (or herself) insensible to pain before the extraction.

## Came Here in 1903.

Dr. Anshutz began his practice after graduation in Franklin, Ind., coming to Terre Haute in 1903. All the equipment needed to set up an office at the turn of the century was a chair, forceps, cuspidor, a foot engine (treadle-type similar to the sewing machine) used to power the drill, and necessary instruments to fill teeth and equipment for the laboratory. If the patient could stand it, the dentist would drill and fill. If not, he'd extract the tooth.

It was the custom in those days to call the dentist to the home whenever he was needed. Sometimes a hysterical patient with a sympathetic audience of doting relatives would give the young dentist a bad time.

In 1903 when Dr. Anshutz first came to Terre Haute, he bought Dr. Vaughn's office at Sixth and Wabash over McKen's Bank (where Rogers Jewelry Store is

now) and remained there eight years until he could acquire office space at Seventh and Wabash in the building owned by "Andy" Coffman.

This building is where the Fannie May Candy Store is now, but at that time was the United Cigar Store. There was over 30 different applicants for this office space where Dr. Anshutz established his office and remained for over 20 years. It was here that he installed the first dental X-ray machine in Terre Haute. The first models were very dangerous with exposed wires and cannot compare with the present day machines which are absolutely safe and easy to operate.

## Larger Quarters Acquired.

Larger quarters were indicated in the early 1930's and when Dr. Duenweg quit his practice, moving out and leaving desirable rooms on the front of the fourth floor of the Tribune Building, Dr. Anshutz and his son Wade, took over these offices. This was to be one of the first really modern dental office in Terre Haute. For several months, partitions were changed, new plumbing installed and the latest decorating ideas were used. The draperies were ordered from Marshall Field in Chicago; the carpets were chosen to harmonize with the different wall colors of each room. The latest electric lift chairs were installed, the newest in cabinets, all the latest in equipment such as pulp-testers, automatic waterfilling glasses, etc. A far cry, indeed, from the chair, forceps and cuspidor of the first office!

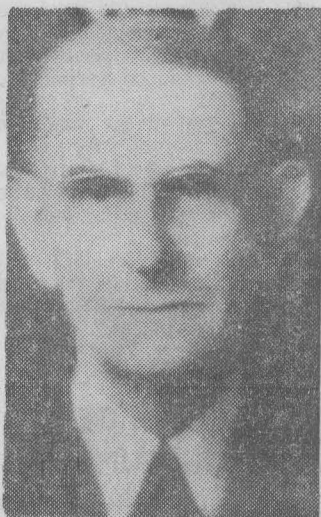
VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Some of the early dentists here that Dr. Anshutz remembers were Dr. Marbach, Dr. Clarence Williams, Dr. Ervin, Dr. Brown and Dr. Mail, who was the most prominent at that time.

Dr. Anshutz recalled his first automobile which was a "Cole." This auto was manufactured in Indianapolis. It was a big, lumbering vehicle weighing over a ton and a half, but the height of fashion then.

The office secretary, Mrs. Ruth Hines, has been with the Drs. Anshutz for over thirty years. Dr. Anshutz decided to retire last year due to ill health, but he keeps up his license and plans to return to the office soon to help with the making of artificial plates and dentures which has been his speciality. His son Wade, and his grandsons Wade, Jr., and Frank B., carry on the family tradition of fine dentistry.



DR. F. P. ANSHUTZ

Trib. Feb 8, 1958

## Dr. F. P. Anshutz Veteran Local Dentist, 84, Dies

One of the oldest practicing dentists in Terre Haute and Indiana, Dr. Frank P. Anshutz, died at 11:45 o'clock Friday night at Union Hospital. He was 84 years old.

Dr. Anshutz suffered an attack at the residence, 1601 South Fifth street, at 8:30 o'clock Friday night and was taken in a P. J. Ryan and Sons ambulance to the hospital. He reportedly succumbed to a malignancy.

The veteran doctor and his son, Dr. Wade B. Anshutz, have had an office in the Tribune Building for many years. In 1946 Dr. Wade B. Anshutz, Jr., joined his grandfather and father in the practice, thus representing three generations of the family in the dental offices. Later, Dr. Frank B. Anshutz, another grandson, joined the firm.

Mrs. Frank P. Anshutz preceded her husband in death several years ago. But before her death the couple celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary.

A graduate of the Ohio Dental College at Cincinnati, Ohio, Dr. Anshutz was a life member of the American Dental Association. He also was a member of the Indiana State Dental Association and the Western Indiana Dental Society.

Besides the son and two grandsons, surviving are one niece and five great-grandchildren.

The body was taken to the P. J. Ryan and Sons Funeral Home where friends may call after 7 o'clock Saturday evening.

Services will be held at the funeral home at 1:30 o'clock Monday afternoon. Rev. George E. Mitchell will officiate and burial will be in Roselawn Memorial Park.

On Page 2, Column 6

## Dr. F. P. Anshutz, Dentist, Succumbs

Dr. Frank P. Anshutz, 84 years old, who was one of the oldest practicing dentists in Terre Haute and Indiana, died at 11:45 o'clock last night at the Union Hospital. He was stricken about 8:30 o'clock at his residence, 1601 South Fifth Street, and was rushed to the hospital, where he succumbed to a malignancy.

For many years Dr. Anshutz and his son, Dr. Wade B. Anshutz, maintained offices for the practice of dentistry in the Tribune Building, later being joined by the elder doctor's grandsons.

In 1946 Dr. Wade B. Anshutz, Jr., entered the office and joined his father and grandfather in practice, making three generations of the family in the dental offices. Still later another grandson, Dr. Frank B. Anshutz, also joined in the practice here.

His wife preceded him in death several years ago, but she and Dr. Anshutz earlier had observed their fiftieth wedding anniversary.

The body was taken to the P. J. Ryan and Sons Funeral Home where arrangements will be announced later.

*Property of*  
Vigo County Historical Society